

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 8, 2007

MEMA ANNOUNCES MANUFACTURER OF FIRST PARK MODEL ALTERNATIVE HOUSING UNITS

Pearl - Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Director Mike Womack announced today that Forest River Housing, Inc. of Elkhart, Ind., has been selected to build the first 200 Park Model units for the Mississippi Alternative Housing Program.

The first units will be used as prototypes to ensure the best design is used in future units and allow time for any design modifications during the ramp-up phase of the project. The company's price to build each unit is approximately \$35,000 and the first unit is expected to be completed within four weeks of the start date; the contract was awarded after a competitive bidding process.

"Governor Barbour has directed us to get these homes built and delivered to families who need them just as quickly as possible, and that is what we intend to do. We will manufacture 200 units initially and place them into service so they can be analyzed in real-life conditions," Womack said. "Following the state's evaluation of the first of these units to ensure the increased safety, durability and overall effectiveness of this pilot model over travel trailers, we will then quickly contract with additional manufacturers to allow for a continuous construction and installation process throughout the summer."

After the first prototype is built and any necessary changes have been made, MEMA will send out a new request for proposals for more than 3,000 additional units; this second round will be open to all bidders, not just those who bid in the first round, and the expectation is that several Mississippi manufacturers will be competitive.

The Mississippi Alternative Housing Program is a pilot program funded by a \$281 million federal grant. The goals of the program are to develop and evaluate safer and more comfortable alternatives to current disaster housing units for future disasters. MEMA is administering the 24-month long program.

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